

# FANTASTIC FOUR



**MARVEL**

**21**  
LQY#714

RATED T+

**BLOOD HUNT**

**TIE-IN**

**NORTH • FIORELLI • ABURTOV**



## JEFFREY VEREGGE



Jeffrey Veregge, 50, passed away April 12, 2024, after a courageous battle with lupus. A member of the Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe, Veregge created a style he called "Salish geek," which combined Native American art, graphic design and comic-book heroes. His striking covers on *Red Wolf* and *Heroes Reborn* stood out from everything else on comic shelves. In 2018, The Smithsonian opened Veregge's exhibition "Of Gods and Heroes," which included his epic mural for the Museum of the Native American in New York. His work on comic covers and in public spaces leave a fantastic legacy that will long be remembered. Our hearts go out to his family and friends.





Here  
they  
are....

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BEN GRIMM  
THE THING

REED RICHARDS  
MR. FANTASTIC

SUSAN RICHARDS  
THE INVISIBLE  
WOMAN

JOHNNY STORM  
THE HUMAN  
TORCH

Together,  
they are the

# FANTASTIC FOUR

& ALICIA  
MASTERS-  
GRIMM

After a period of upheaval and the temporary loss of their Baxter Building headquarters, the Fantastic Four are all now living together at the Grimm family farmstead in Arizona.

**"TO CURSE THE  
DARKNESS!"**

writer: RYAN NORTH  
artist: IVAN FIORELLI

color artist: JESUS ABURTOV  
letterer: VC's JOE CARAMAGNA

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Fantastic Four Created by  
STAN LEE & JACK KIRBY



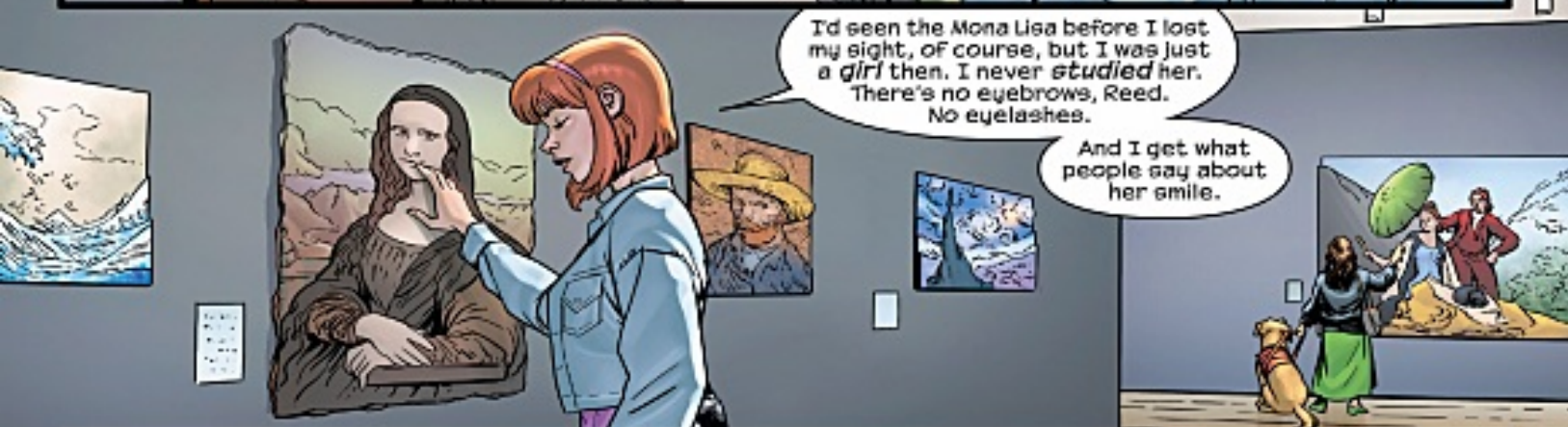






I'd seen the Mona Lisa before I lost my sight, of course, but I was just a *girl* then. I never *studied* her. There's no eyebrows. No eyelashes.

And I get what people say about her smile.



She's beautiful.



One recalls a paper in *Science*, I believe in volume 290, number 5445, that argues her smile is largely rendered in low spatial frequency ranges, which makes it more apparent in peripheral vision than when under direct observation.

Heh. One does, does he?



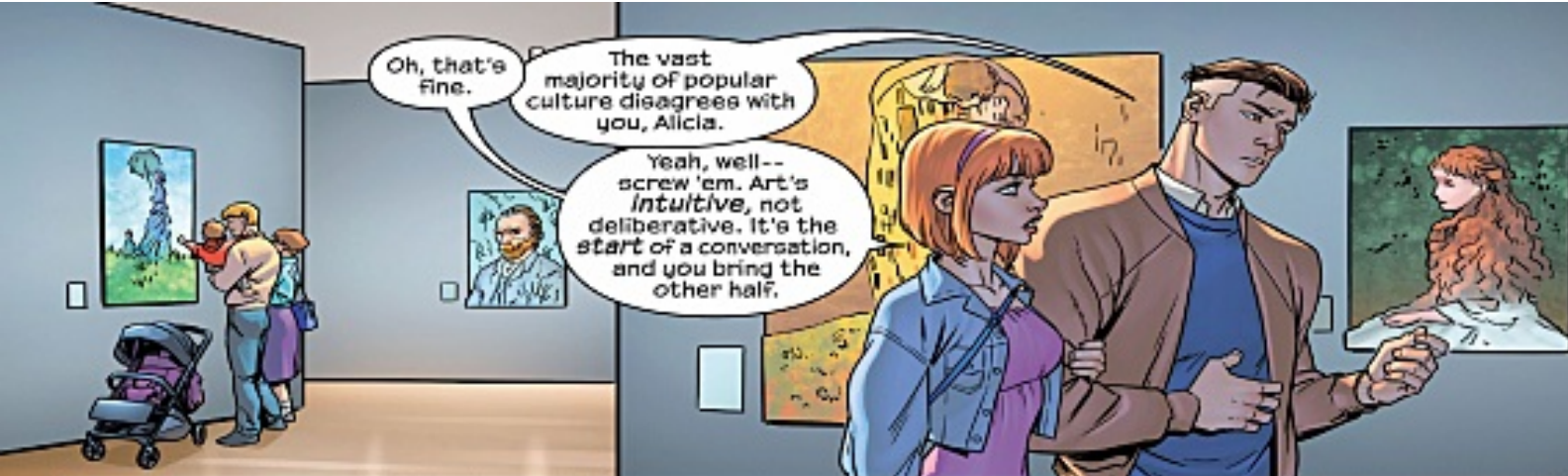
I apologize, Alicia. I can understand art--its *intent*, its *purpose*--but I don't *feel* it.

You just stood in front of a great work of art and were moved to tears. I've never experienced that.

No artwork has provoked *any* sort of emotional reaction in me that even *approaches* that.



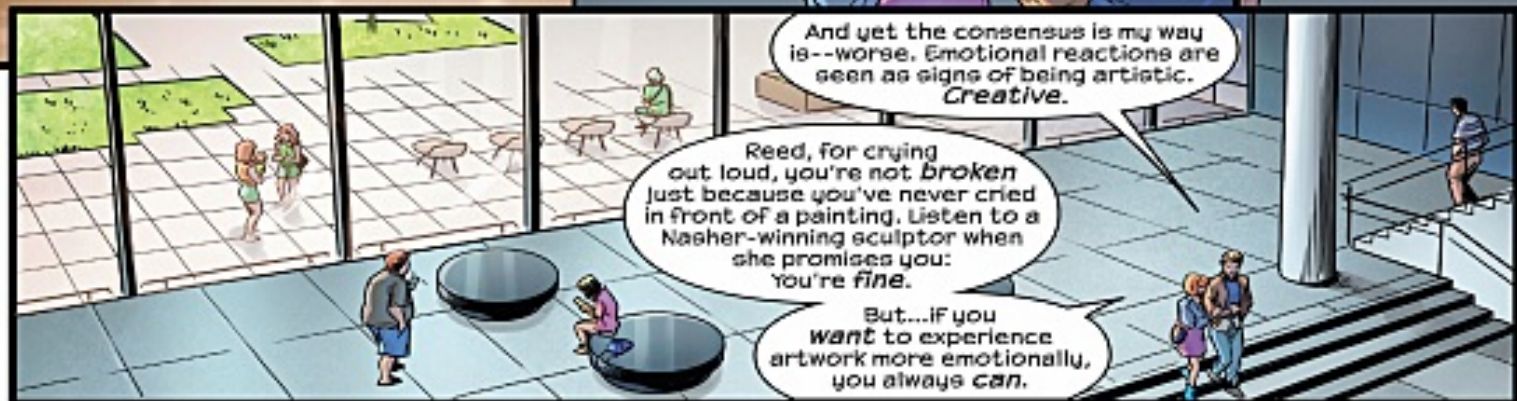




Oh, that's fine.

The vast majority of popular culture disagrees with you, Alicia.

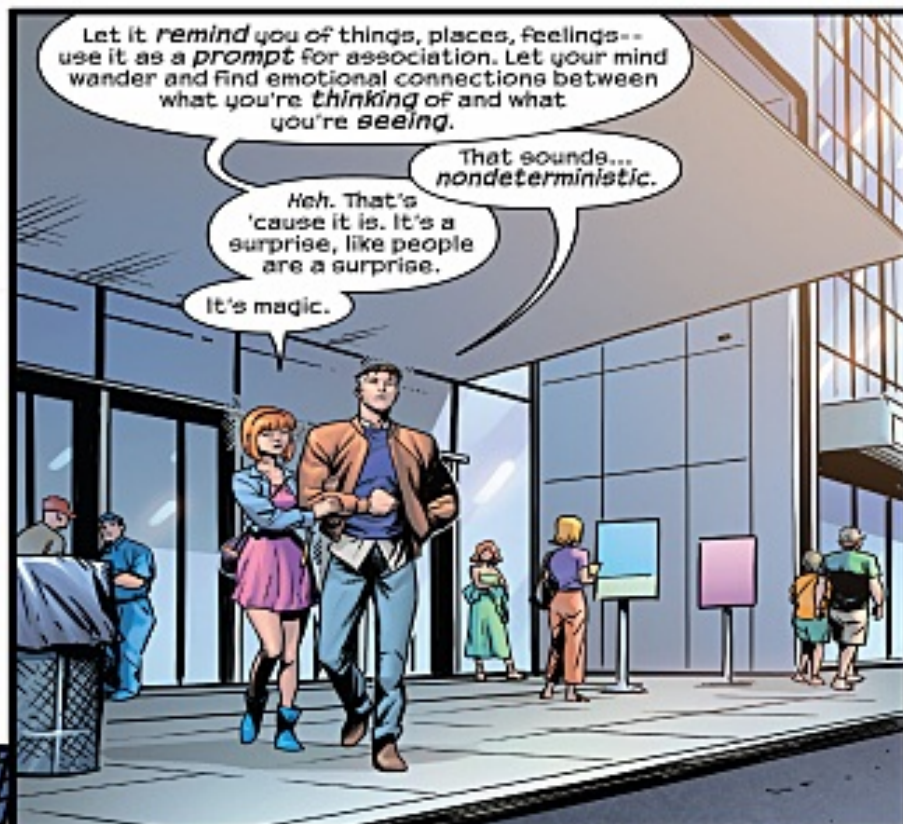
Yeah, well-- screw 'em. Art's *intuitive*, not deliberative. It's the *start* of a conversation, and you bring the other half.



And yet the consensus is my way is--worse. Emotional reactions are seen as signs of being artistic. *Creative*.

Reed, for crying out loud, you're not *broken* just because you've never cried in front of a painting. Listen to a *Nasher-winning* sculptor when she promises you: *You're fine*.

But...if you *want* to experience artwork more emotionally, you always *can*.



Let it *remind* you of things, places, feelings-- use it as a *prompt* for association. Let your mind wander and find emotional connections between what you're *thinking of* and what you're *seeing*.

That sounds... *nondeterministic*.

Heh. That's 'cause it is. It's a surprise, like people are a surprise.

It's magic.



Well, I'm much less comfortable with *magic* than I am with predictable outputs from reliable inputs. But you know what?

I'll give it a try next time we--



That's strange. The sun's gone, Alicia. Everything's in *darkness*.


No.

Yeah, I feel it. Sudden cloud cover?



REED RICHARDS AND  
ALICIA MASTERS-GRIMM IN:

# "TO CURSE THE DARKNESS!"



No, I  
think it's  
worse than  
that.









There're people running out of the darkness, and they're--they're biting other people!

Like zombies?

No--they're not tearing flesh, it's more like they're...drinking blood?



Vampires. of course.



Vampires are mythical creatures, Alicia--they don't--

Yeah, and you've teamed up with Ghost Rider and *still* say ghosts aren't real. If it walks like a vampire and bites like a vampire...

Fair. In any case, my flexible skin can't be pierced by bites. And if that can protect me...



...then it can protect you as well!

Appreciate it, but you gotta save the others too!

I assure you, Alicia...





...I'm  
working  
on it.



But  
there are an  
unexpectedly  
high  
number--



SMACK!

SMACK!

--of  
assailants.

SMACK!

SMACK!

SMACK!

SMACK!

Wait--crazy  
idea, but *how* big can  
you stretch?

It depends on the  
depth of my flesh and the  
complexity of the shape, the internal  
supports I need to maintain, and, of  
course, it comes with risks that rise  
in proportion with--

What if you  
had a *framework*  
though? Like,  
say...



...a  
museum?



And so:

I only wish we could've saved more.

C'mon, Reed. You did what you could.

And because of that, we've saved dozens who would've otherwise been bitten by the *vampires*.

By individuals exhibiting vampire-like qualities, yes.

And whose bites also seem to produce beings with identical vampire-like qualities.

The power appears to be out, at least in this area. This is madness. An attack of this scale and so sudden--it's *impossible*.

So nothing you haven't dealt with before, then.

Heh.

I appreciate it, Alicia, you keeping my spirits up. But right now, we're at an impasse.

The city is overrun with-- we'll call them "vampires" as a convenient shorthand--and with cell service down, we can't even confirm that people outside the museum still exist.

On one hand, New York *has* historically attracted an anomalous and statistically significant share of events like this. But on the other hand, we have *no data*.

What's happening here *could* be happening worldwide. And if it is...

...then how are our families doing?





We ain't doin' so hot, kids! Stay behind me, yeah?

At least we know vampires really *can't* stand the sun. But that sunlight's getting smaller, Sue!

Thanks, Johnny-- I noticed!



Those clouds have to be DarkForce energy--they're *fighting* me.

It's taking all I have just to make a small section transparent enough to let light through! I'm not *gaining* any ground!



So we're *alone*, surrounded by *vampires* and losing what little *sunlight* we have left.

And I don't think I can hold the DarkForce off for much longer.

Are we gonna die, Daddy?



No, Nicki, we ain't dyin' or UNdyin' or *anything*. If we lose the *sun*, Susie can always make a force-field around us.

And then-- and I *promise* ya this part--Reed'll think 'a *somethin'*. He always does.




Ugh! Get in closer! I'm losing the *light*!



...Reed'll think 'a *somethin'*.






There *have* to be other survivors in the city.


Agreed, but even if I ignore my usual safety thresholds, there's still only so far I can *stretch* with most of my body left here. Plus, the number of attempted *bites* on my flesh is increasing.

If there was only some way *others* could search without getting bit...



...according to folklore, vampires are vulnerable to *sunlight*--a weakness that would seem to be substantiated with the *darkness* that precipitated their attack.

And I've observed the museum uses *L.E.D.* lighting.



If I could *modify* those diodes to emit *full-spectrum* light, structurally identical to the sun's *spectrographic* signature...

...then that'd give us a *defense*. We could save everyone, at least until help arrives.

I love it.





Assume, just for the sake of *argument*, that these really *are* magical vampires identical to those described in folklore. The second law of thermodynamics is, of course, *wildly* incompatible with physical immortality...





Shortly:







Three more survivors incoming, Alicia. ETA thirty seconds.

Good work. We've got three more teams with ten more survivors heading back too.



I'm bringing them into the building now.

Welcome. You're safe here, and we're going to keep you that way.

If you know of anyone else out there, let us know and we'll go for them next.



That was a successful run.

You're doing great, Reed, which, ironically, gives us a *new* problem. We need power, we need batteries...

...and very soon, we're also going to need more *space*.



But I spy in my mind's little eye something that's defensible, just a half-hour walk away, fits twenty thousand people easy and has a *generator*.

Which we could use to power all those big bright L.E.D. lights it has inside-- *and* running along its circumference.

Precisely.



Spread the word, and let's get the survivors supplied and ready.

We're moving to *Madison Square Garden*.



And so:

Times Square, Alicia-- we're halfway there.

I believe this is going to work.

Told ya it would. How are you holding up?

Suffice it to say I'm glad I won't have to stretch quite so far shortly. But even so, the stadium is just a Band-Aid. We still need a cure.

A cure for a magical curse that lets you be dead, but also alive, but also gross, but also some people find you really sexy anyway.

You want to solve vampirism.

Yes. We have artificial sunlight, obviously, but that's only a cure for vampirism in the sense that a gun is a cure for cancer. I believe we can save the newly infected, help them recover.

I can fix what I can understand, but a magical blood curse...

...it doesn't make sense. I can't understand it, because it doesn't fit in with the rest of my knowledge.

Everything I know says it's impossible. How can one bite possibly accomplish what it does and so quickly? What are the rules that we need to operate under?

Well then, I have some good news, Mr. Fantastic--you *already* know the rules. They're the same as they always were.

Do good. Save everyone.

And make sure you leave the universe a brighter place than you found it.



I've got both exterior and interior lights modified, and the generator's running...

...but the system's still offline. *Hrm.*

Of course. The wires must lead to a control room in the suspension-roof utility space.

Can you reach them?

I believe so. A quick stretch up...

Oof.

...with some pain--I'm already well past what I'd normally consider my *limits* here.

And all we need is to flip a switch...

**ka-  
CHUNK**

...Alicia Masters-Grimm...

...I believe we have ourselves a *fortress of light*.

**CHOOOCHOOM!**



That night:

Reed?  
Are you  
awake?

I am. It's remarkable--the unprecedented stretching today was such that my usual form feels like a *panacea*, but I'm still having trouble falling asleep.

If it was *just* New York that was attacked, we'd have *heard* something by now. There'd be a *rescue*.

My thoughts have been evolving along similar lines. Given the atmospheric changes, this may be *worldwide*.

Reed...

Same. But-- this is the first chance I've really had to *think* since this whole thing started. To process. Process all that's happened...

...do you think  
our children  
are dead?

Ben will be fine-- nobody's biting through *his* skin. And Sue has her *force-fields*, and Johnny has his *fire*, but--

--but  
our kids are  
just kids.

They're  
just--

They're just  
*kids*, and they haven't  
*done* anything, and we  
just got them *back*,  
and they--

--they--





I don't know, Alicia. That's my honest answer. I calculate a 47.5% chance they're fine and a 47.5% chance they're not.

But I also calculate a 100% chance that Ben, Sue and Johnny are moving heaven and earth to *protect* them.



I know.  
I know.

Thank you,  
Reed. For--  
reminding me.  
It means  
a lot.

You're  
welcome.



...What's that  
last 5% chance  
for?

A situation wherein  
Johnny becomes vampirized  
through inattention, Evil Vampire  
Johnny realizes that flaming on  
would burn off his infection and so the  
others have to find various ways  
to *trick* him into  
flaming on.



Heh. Yask  
me, that should  
be closer to  
20%.

I'll  
reevaluate my  
probabilities.

Good night,  
Reed.

Good night,  
Alicia.







Do it. Do it.  
I want to feed.  
I have to feed.

I  
can smell  
them.



So many  
warm bodies  
filled with hot  
blood. So  
many.

The light  
will burn us.  
We'll die.

Some of  
us will.



ALL of us  
WON'T!!



ARRRGHHH!



AGGGHHH!

AHHHGH!









Feed!

Feed!

FEEEEEED!!!

**CONTINUED  
NEXT MONTH!**



# BLOOD HUNT

## CHECKLIST

### JUNE

- ☒ **BLOOD HUNT #3**
- ☒ **BLOOD HUNT: RED BAND #3**
- ☒ DRACULA: BLOOD HUNT #2
- ☒ X-MEN: BLOOD HUNT – JUBILEE #1
- ☒ UNION JACK THE RIPPER: BLOOD HUNT #2
- ☒ DOCTOR STRANGE #16
- ☒ VENGEANCE OF THE MOON KNIGHT #6
- ☒ FANTASTIC FOUR #21
- ☐ WOLVERINE: BLOOD HUNT #1
- ☐ BLOOD HUNTERS #2
- ☐ STRANGE ACADEMY: BLOOD HUNT #2
- ☐ MILES MORALES: SPIDER-MAN #21
- ☐ VENOM #34
- ☐ AMAZING SPIDER-MAN: BLOOD HUNT #2
- ☐ AVENGERS #15
- ☐ BLACK PANTHER: BLOOD HUNT #2
- ☐ MIDNIGHT SONS: BLOOD HUNT #2
- ☐ **BLOOD HUNT #4**
- ☐ **BLOOD HUNT: RED BAND #4**
- ☐ X-MEN: BLOOD HUNT – MAGIK #1
- ☐ WOLVERINE: BLOOD HUNT #2

### JULY

- ☐ BLACK PANTHER: BLOOD HUNT #3
- ☐ BLOOD HUNTERS #3
- ☐ DOCTOR STRANGE #17
- ☐ DRACULA: BLOOD HUNT #3
- ☐ MILES MORALES: SPIDER-MAN #22
- ☐ WEREWOLF BY NIGHT: BLOOD HUNT #1
- ☐ AVENGERS #16
- ☐ HULK: BLOOD HUNT #1
- ☐ UNION JACK THE RIPPER: BLOOD HUNT #3
- ☐ WOLVERINE: BLOOD HUNT #3
- ☐ AMAZING SPIDER-MAN: BLOOD HUNT #3
- ☐ BLOOD HUNTERS #4
- ☐ X-MEN: BLOOD HUNT – LAURA KINNEY THE WOLVERINE #1
- ☐ **BLOOD HUNT #5**
- ☐ **BLOOD HUNT: RED BAND #5**
- ☐ FANTASTIC FOUR #22
- ☐ MIDNIGHT SONS: BLOOD HUNT #3
- ☐ STRANGE ACADEMY: BLOOD HUNT #3
- ☐ VENGEANCE OF THE MOON KNIGHT #7
- ☐ WOLVERINE: BLOOD HUNT #4



# FANTASTIC FOUR FAN PAGE

Dear FF Team,

I will try to be brief. I really enjoy the current run. I have been continuously reading the stories of the First Family from the mid-eighties but it was issue #707 that made me write my first letter to Marvel. Being a university professor whose research field is chaotic dynamics, I thought it would have "the usual superficial approach to chaos" when the butterfly effect was brought up in that issue. But I was positively surprised when Reed said, "...increasing Earth's Lyapunov prediction time..." (which, to the nonexperts, is a real term!), because it shows that Ryan indeed did his job, engaging a bit more with chaos theory! That was fun! Well done: A+.

Haris Skokos  
University of Cape Town  
South Africa

**Ryan always does his homework, Haris, and he's a good sight smarter and better read than most of the rest of us Marvel madmen!**

Hi, guys,

I felt I needed to write to you after reading what Damir Segon wrote in the letters page of FF #15. Damir said that this latest series doesn't feel like the FF he grew up with in the eighties, and, in particular, that the characters don't look like themselves. He also said that he assumed that the people who were enjoying this run and saying so were "much younger" than him and enjoying "their FF"—a rather condescending comment that I take great exception to. So, for the record: I'm a 54-year-old Marvelite (yes, old enough to remember when that term was a thing) who's been reading FF since the mid-seventies, and I have been absolutely loving this series. As for the art, it's some of the best Marvel is currently publishing. I absolutely do recognize these characters, so please don't let Ivan go anywhere anytime soon.

Tony Ingram  
Suffolk, UK

**Appreciate your support, Tony!  
(And yours too, Damir!)**

Dear FF team,

I've been hearing the hype about Sue's special issue for a while now, and after reading it the mystery conclusion was satisfactory! It felt like it began with a real "The FF Files" energy, just getting chills from introducing something that should be impossible. This issue also really highlighted everyone's love and respect for Alicia and how she's been so well written and truly part of the team in this run! It was lovely to see Reed and Sue use the time platform for their date. The scene with Sue using binoculars and Reed going awooga eyes like a cartoon wolf at the historic event was funny. Cannot stress enough how Ryan North's prior research and science and dinosaur writing background brings great energy to their episodic adventures.

Lan Li  
Chicago, IL

**And now, this month's brief word concerning the debate of our era:**

Hello, F4 Team,

Johnny needs to keep the mustache. 'Nuff said.

Thanks for the great comic,

Michael Lederhos

**'Nuff said indeed, Michael!**

Hi, people!

My god, Rama-Tut is such a moron!

So, he has decided the best way to get rid of the FF is to eradicate the first immigrants to America? In other words, to eradicate all those we call Native Americans?

Oookay.

Did he consider that the FF is very likely of European stock, of those who came in from the *Mayflower* onward? And that, while history will most certainly be impacted by the absence of a native population, it probably won't affect too much of the history of science in the Marvel Universe? So, while the FF themselves won't exist as they are, there's a good probability that science will progress at about the same pace and that there might be similar circumstances that will lead to the emergence of a similar group of super-powered people?

Not likely, you say?

Granted.

But has clever genius Rama-Tut remembered that HE comes from the future and from a future America too, and that there's a very, very good chance that, by drastically altering the past, he's going to eradicate himself?

Whatta maroon! 😏

Mind you, Rama-Tut is basically a rich thug, who found some plans for a working time machine. One should not be too surprised if his long-range thinking is not too sharp.

Patrick Marcel

**Aw, I think poor ol' Rama-Tut is a bit smarter than that, Patrick. After all, he eventually turns into Kang the Conqueror, a legitimate threat of a villain. But everybody's got to start someplace.**

Tom B  
4/22/24

As always, if you've got an opinion to share, you can email it to us at [MHEROES@MARVEL.COM](mailto:MHEROES@MARVEL.COM). Be sure to mark your letters as "Okay To Print!" if you'd like to see them featured here on the Fan Page!



# BLOOD HUNT TIE-IN!

**NEXT:**

